# How to Make Bubble Tea

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Bubble tea, in short:** Bubble tea is strong brewed tea, cooked tapioca pearls and milk balanced by taste, not a sugar bomb: brew double strength, use pearls quickly, sweeten.

Bubble tea (boba) is sweetened, usually milky, tea served cold with chewy tapioca pearls and a wide straw. It is fun and it is a sweet treat, and a clear guide gives you a working home recipe, the one technique that matters (the pearls), and a frank look at the sugar a typical shop cup carries.

*Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in May 2026.*

## What you need

Per serving: cooked tapioca (boba) pearls, strong brewed tea (black or green is classic), milk or a milk alternative, ice, a wide straw, and sweetener to taste (traditionally a sugar syrup, often brown sugar syrup). Optional: fruit syrups or purees for fruit versions.

## How to make it, step by step

Cook the pearls per their packet, generally boiled then rested, until fully chewy with no hard centre, this is the step that makes or breaks bubble tea and is the whole skill; undercooked pearls are unpleasant and overcooked ones turn to mush, and they are best used within a few hours. Steep a strong tea base and chill it. Soak the cooked pearls in a little sugar syrup. In a glass: pearls, ice, strong tea, milk, sweetener to taste; stir and drink through a wide straw.

## How to make it genuinely good

Good bubble tea comes down to chewy fresh pearls and a tea base strong enough to taste through the milk and ice; weak tea is the commonest home mistake after badly cooked pearls. Brew the tea robustly, chill it hard, and add sweetener gradually and taste, rather than dumping in syrup.

## Worth knowing

Sugar is the thing to watch, and it is a big one here: a typical shop bubble tea is one of the most sugar dense drinks on the high street once the sweetened tea, the syrup and the sugar soaked pearls are added together, frequently well beyond a soft drink. Making it at home is the best move, not because home boba is diet food (it is still a sweet treat) but because every gram of that sugar becomes your decision: lighter syrup,

less of it, unsweetened pearls, and you keep all the fun with the sugar firmly under control.

### Bubble tea, at a glance

| Element | Short rule |
|---|---|
| What you need | Strong brewed tea, cooked tapioca pearls, milk, sweetener |
| Brew strong | Double strength; ice and milk dilute it hard |
| Pearls | Cook then use quickly; they harden within hours |
| Balance | Sweeten to taste, not to the shop default |
| vs at-home guide | This is the quick how-to; the detailed version has ratios and economics |

### Reference noted

- Britannica: Tea (beverage)

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*teas* · Spend less on prestige, more on freshness. Bags bought two months ago will taste fresher than a gift tin of three years.

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